

and offices to consider the environmental impact of decisions on minority and low-income populations.

Background: On February 11, 1994, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." The President also issued a corresponding Memorandum to all federal departments and agencies further explaining the order and how the agencies should implement it to address environmental justice issues. The Order and Memorandum called for the creation of an interagency working group to provide guidance on identifying disproportionate impacts on the health and environment of minority and low-income populations, develop strategies to address such disproportionate impacts, and provide a report on that strategy. Since the order was promulgated, the affected agencies have developed reports and strategies.

Need for the Bill: Although federal agencies and offices have been complying with the Executive Order, disproportionate impacts related to human health and the environment still exist for many minority and low-income communities. These impacts must be addressed over the long term. In addition, due to the lack of resources and political clout of many of these impacted communities, vigilance is required to make sure that disproportionate impacts are reduced and do not continue. As the effort to date has been primarily administrative based on the presidential order and memorandum, these strategies need to be incorporated into the routine functioning of federal agencies and offices through federal law.

The bill—Requires federal agencies and offices to: include addressing environmental justice concerns into their respective missions; conduct programs so as not to create disproportionate impact on minority and low-income populations; include an examination of the effects of such action on the health and environment of minority and low-income populations for actions that require environmental analyses under the National Environmental Policy Act; create an environmental justice strategy to address disproportionate impacts of its policies and actions, and conduct and collect research on the disproportionate impacts from federal facilities.

Creates an Interagency Environmental Justice Working Group to develop strategies, provide guidance, coordinate research, convene public meetings, and conduct inquiries regarding environmental justice issues.

Creates a Federal Environmental Justice Advisory Committee composed of members of community-based groups, business, academic, state agencies and environmental organizations which will provide input and advice to the Interagency Working Group.

SELECTED RESERVE HOME LOAN EQUITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1257, the "Selected Reserve Home Loan Equity Act."

The Selected Reserves are the reserve forces of the various branches of the military. Each branch of our Armed Forces, the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, have Selected Reserve Corps. Additionally, Coast Guard Reserves, as well as the Army National Guard and the Air Guard have Selected Reserve Corps.

In Texas, the Selected Reserve Corps is thriving. Texas has 1.35 million volunteers serving in the Guard and Selected Reserve Corps. Of those, 8,370 members are serving in the Coast Guard Selected Reserve.

While the Selected Reserves don't get the accolades rightfully showered upon our Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines, they provide invaluable service to our country. Since 1990, there have been 99 major commitments of Americans in uniform. In each of these conflicts, both active duty and Selective Reserve Corps have been deployed to virtually every corner of the globe.

H.R. 1257 amends Title 38 of the United States Code, "to make permanent the authority for qualifying members of the Selected Reserve to have access to home loans guaranteed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to provide for uniformity in fees charged qualifying members of the Selected Reserve and active duty veterans for such home loans."

I support H.R. 1257 because it is a way for this body to thank our Select Reservists the same way we thank the brave veteran men and women who have served their country so valiantly. The Department of Veterans Affairs provides our active and inactive military personnel with various services and benefits. One of the benefits provided is guaranteed home loans at reasonable fees.

Presently, members of the Selected Reserves are eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs loans. However, the current program is scheduled to expire at the end of fiscal year 2009. Moreover, Selected Reservists pay a higher fee on guaranteed home loans than do active duty veterans. H.R. 1257 grants Selected Reservists permanent access to guaranteed home loans just as like veterans. Selected Reservists will also be eligible for the same fee structure as veterans.

Our Selected Reservists are an important part of our exemplary military, and are integral to protecting our homeland and bringing peace throughout the world. Providing our military personnel, including members of the Selected Reserve with access to economically beneficial programs like guaranteed loans is one small way to thank them for their service.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1257, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE LARRY COMBEST

SPEECH OF

HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 19, 2003

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate LARRY COMBEST on his nearly twenty years of service for the people of Texas. He has had a wonderful career helping others at the local level, helping others as a Congressman and helping others as the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee.

He has served this House of Representatives and our country well. He will be truly missed.

As a freshman member I had the pleasure of serving with LARRY on the Agriculture Committee. During this time, I found him to be a wealth of information regarding agriculture policy and I relied on him heavily on many issues that were debated in the committee. As Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Larry made great efforts to consider the diversity of America's agriculture, which helped us to create a broad and sensible agricultural policy.

Larry has traveled to southwest Missouri to meet with students and to seek advice from farmers where I live. He has worked tirelessly for the future of agriculture in America.

One of the best examples of this effort is found in "The Farm Security Act of 2002". In developing this landmark legislation, LARRY organized numerous field hearings throughout the country in an attempt to understand what America needed in sound farm policy. He also felt that it was necessary to talk to farmers and local people seeking grassroots advice. As a result of this Chairman COMBEST helped develop a road map that will improve agriculture policy and help secure the future of our Nation.

I stand here today to congratulate Chairman COMBEST on his years of service and to wish LARRY and Sharon the best as they begin a new chapter in their lives.

HONORING BISHOP LAWRENCE L. KIRBY

HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Bishop Lawrence L. Kirby of Racine, Wisconsin for the spiritual leadership that he has provided to the members of the St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church and the positive influence that he has had on Racine's African American community.

For the past 22 years, Bishop Kirby has served as the Senior Pastor at St. Paul's Missionary Baptist Church, the oldest African-American church in the State of Wisconsin. Under his leadership, St. Paul's has grown significantly, evolving into one of the largest and most influential churches in the State. A visionary leader, Bishop Kirby has implemented a series of progressive assistance and developmental programs that serve the needs of the entire community. He has also founded numerous faith-based community organizations and has been called to preach around the world, spreading a message of faith, tolerance and compassion.

Throughout his career, Bishop Kirby has remained steadfastly dedicated to helping others and he has not wavered in his commitment to his family, his church, his community and God. His generous actions have touched the lives of the less fortunate, filling their hearts with love and inspiring them to succeed. The citizens of Wisconsin's First Congressional District are fortunate to have been blessed with this wonderful, caring and compassionate man. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Bishop Lawrence L. Kirby for his efforts to make the world a better place in which to live.